

# **SYSTEMATIC APPROACH TO TRAINING AND EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE OF MURANG'A COUNTY GOVERNMENT, KENYA**

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©2019

**International Academic Journal of Human Resource and Business Administration  
(IAJHRBA) | ISSN 2518-2374**

**Received:** 4<sup>th</sup> November 2019

**Published:** 12<sup>th</sup> November 2019

Full Length Research

**Available Online at:** [http://www.iajournals.org/articles/iajhrba\\_v3\\_i7\\_318\\_331.pdf](http://www.iajournals.org/articles/iajhrba_v3_i7_318_331.pdf)

**Citation:** Wacheke, M. W. & Rosemarie, W. (2019). Systematic approach to training and employee performance of Murang'a county government, Kenya. *International Academic Journal of Human Resource and Business Administration*, 3(7), 318-331

## **ABSTRACT**

Many public sector organizations engage in training of staff and have departments, units and sectors in charge of training. The County government of Murang'a is one such organization that has been practicing training since its beginning and particularly for the past five years. However, for about five years now it appears training in the county government is unsystematic, and several of its employees such as accounts clerks, secretaries, drivers and support staff have not qualified for any form of training nor is there any systematic process of staff training in place. Owing to this the service delivery by employees in the county government has declined and the employees are not effective and efficient in their roles. The study sought to determine the systematic approach to training on employee performance in Murang'a County government, Kenya. The specific objectives were to determine the effect of the training needs analysis, training design, training policies and training programs evaluation on performance of employees in Murang'a County. The study was anchored on the following three theories; resource based view theory, social learning theory and human capital theory. The study used a descriptive research design. The population of study was all county government employees Murang'a County's 7 Sub-counties. The sample was developed using stratified random sampling technique, the sample size was 10% of the total population. The primary data was collected by use of self-administered semi-structured questionnaire. Validity of the questionnaires was ensured through face content and

construct validity while reliability was confirmed using the Cronbach's alpha with a threshold of 0.7. Data analysis was done by use of both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive analysis was done using mean scores and standard deviation and inferential statistics was measured using multiple regression with 0.5% level of significance using SPSS version 21 software. Data was presented using tables, charts and graphs. The study established that systematic approach training had a positive and significant effect on the performance of employees in the County Government of Murang'a. It was concluded that the county government to a moderate extent employed training needs analysis as a systematic approach training to improve the capacity of new and existing employees in their operations. The study concludes that the county government to a significant extent has enhanced training design development, customization, facilitation and policy reinforcement. The study concluded that the county had training policies in place but their implementation, monitoring and feedback were below expectations and evaluated its training programs however not continuously and was mainly reactionary instead of being a learning one to enable draw feedback and come up with areas of improvement. The study recommends that the county government of Murang'a needs to involve employees in training needs assessment to improve the relevance of the trainings. The study recommended that there is need for continuous monitoring and evaluation of the training programs to ensure optimal performance. The county government needs to come up with friendly

and relevant training policies that can enhance capacity development among the new, existing and stakeholder staff.

**Key Words:** *training design, training policies, training programme, evaluation, training, needs analysis, performance, employee*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Employee performance and productivity is of major concern in any economy worldwide. Choudry (2012) in his study Determinants of Labor Productivity, notes that Africa and South Asian countries (except India) performance in labor productivity is not very encouraging. Labor productivity level in 2015 in Sub-Saharan Africa economies was the lowest among all regions. He further emphasized the need to pay more attention on average education attainment level, producing productive employment to attract foreign direct investments. Human resources management practices have significant impact on organizations productivity. Abdulla (2012) points out that training, team work, human resources planning and performance appraisal are correlated with an organizations business performance.

In Kenya studies conducted by Kiragu (2011), Obong'o (2012) and Kim (2015) had indicated that there are factors that created differences in how public sector organizations coped with change. The main factor was that the performance aims of most public sector organizations differed from firms in the private sector whose strategic transformation were to produce profit. Public organizations were normally limited in terms of flexibility and autonomy as there was political interference, broad accountability and performance expectations continuously shift.

The impact of training has been given significant attention by senior managers, human resource officers and industrial psychologists. Consistent employee performance in any organization has proven to be an issue of concern in several organizations globally (Shamsuzzoha & Shumon, 2015). Furthermore, the ultimate aim of every training program is to add value to human resource. Any training program that would not add value should be abandoned. Organizations should therefore make training of their employees a continuous activity (Kamau, 2014). Arnoff (2011) observes that training foster the initiative and creativity of employees and help to prevent manpower obsolescence, which may be due to age, attitude or the inability of a person to adapt him or herself to technological changes. According to Obisi (2011) training is a process through which the skills, talent and knowledge of an employee is enhanced and increased. He argues that training should take place only when the need and objectives for such training have been identified Scott, Clothier and Spriegel (2017) agree that training is the corner-stone of sound management, for it makes employees more effective and productive. They argue that training is actively and intimately connected with all the personnel and managerial activities. It would be difficult for a new employee to grow on the job and become a manager without adequate training

Bruce (2014) points out that under-management is the underlying issue in most cases of sub optimal work performance at all levels. The undermanaged employee struggles since the

supervisor is not sufficiently engaged to provide the direction and support needed. An employee operating in an environment that has good team cohesion is likely to dedicate effort towards realizing the expected performance levels. Performance appraisal plays a significant role in defining an employee's performance.

Training facilitates the updating of skills and lead to increase commitment, wellbeing, and sense of belonging, thus directly strengthening the organization's competitiveness (Acton and Golden, 2011; Karia and Ahmad, 2015; Karia, 2015). Training has the distinct role in the achievement of an organizational goal by incorporating the interests of organization and the workforce (Stone 2011). The primary role of training is to improve the employees' skill for current and future duties and responsibilities. It is, therefore, every organizations responsibility to enhance the job performance of the employees and certainly implementation of training is one of the major steps that most companies need to attain this. As is evident that employees are a rare and vital resource, it is important to optimize the contribution of employees to the company aims and goals as a means of sustaining effective performance.

This therefore prompts for an immediate call for managers to ensure that there is enough supply of employees that is technically and socially competent and able of career development into specialist departments or managerial positions. (Afshan et al, 2012). It is against this backdrop that the study intends to establish the influence of training on employee performance among county governments in Kenya with a special focus on Murang'a County government, Kenya.

## **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Public sector employee performance has been a challenge to most countries in both Africa and the globe at large. Poor means of accountability, monitoring, skill and knowledge base, bureaucracy, nepotism and corruption among others contribute to compromised employee productivity in the public sector. In Kenya, both the national and county governments have been faced with a blotted wage bill with most workers being ghost, not reporting on time nor performing their duties as required due to poor capacity and accountability procedures. In Murang'a County, there is need for training of the employees that are on board as service delivery is poor and in most cases delayed. Murang'a county government has faced challenges just like other counties in Kenya or irregular recruitment and selection, nepotism, ghost workers, weak human resource systems and hence poor employee performance of the county human resource, In accordance to Corruption and ethics Survey (2014). There is need therefore to systematically train the employees to ensure that they are at par with the required standards. This will enhance employee performance in areas of customer service, service delivery, systems training, management which are poor in order to achieve county goals. There is also need for training and capacity building in the Murang'a County to enhance performance among employees in the devolved units. Training will also reduce wastage of resources as training improves effective and efficiency delivery of services and performance. According to Wawira et al., (2017) Performance of the sub county unit depends on the kind of workforce that is in place

Many studies have shown a positive relationship between training strategies generally and performance (Huselid, 2017; Delery & Doty, 2016; Bae & Lawler, 2015; Katou, 2014; Ahmad & Schroeder, 2013; Armstrong & Baron, 2012; Guthrie; Batt, 2011;). Despite these findings most studies have been characterized by lack of a solid theoretical foundation explaining the mechanisms causing the observed enhanced performance. Available studies do not adequately investigate exactly how a good alignment between each of the training firm strategy leads to improved performance. It is therefore difficult to conclusively state the effect of training and use of strategies for each of the human resource management functions on performance. It is on this background that this study was undertaken to investigate the effect of strategic approach training on employee performance of county governments in Kenya.

## **THEORETICAL REVIEW**

### **Resource-based View Theory**

This theory was postulated by Penrose in 1959. The theory argues that firms perform differently due to their unique internal and external resources that may not be imitated or transferred. An organization's resources can be divided into tangible (financial, technological, physical and human) and intangible (brand-name, reputation and know-how) resources. Barney (1991) argued that resources lead to sustainable competitive advantage when they are valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable.

### **Socio Learning Theory**

This theory was developed by Bandura (1977) and emphasizes that people learn by mean of observing, imitation and modeling different people (models) who they believe are credible and knowledgeable. Consequently top leaders act as models in the course of mentorship and job instruction to other people. According to social learning theory, gaining knowledge of new abilities or behaviours is well done by way of looking at others and seeing the consequences in their behaviour in addition to learning is inspired through someone's self-efficacy, someone's judgment about whether he or she can effectively learn expertise and skills. Modeling includes having employees who already have mastered to perform a task/job to display them to trainees. The model must be credible.

### **Human Capital Theory**

Human capital theory was developed by Becker (1993) provided the basis for the perspective that training is a worthwhile investment. The emphasis of human capital theory is how training influences on efficiency and productivity of workers through growing level of cognitive inventory of economically productive human functionality (Olaniyan and Okemakinde, 2014). The theory shows that individuals and the whole society gain economic benefits from investments in people (Sweetland, 2017).

## **EMPIRICAL REVIEW**

### **Training Needs Analysis and Employee Performance**

According to Kamila Ludwikowska (2018) in his study of the effectiveness of Training Needs Analysis and its relation to employee efficiency. Investigations were done on the effectiveness's of the training processes and its phases contribute in enhancing the employee efficiency in the social service environment in any organization. The study revealed that proper training needs analysis before embarking on training programs proved to be more effective to the recipients of training than when training was administered haphazardly. Wright et al., (2013) on their study on modes of training needs analysis comment that Person analysis involves determining whether task performance by individual employees is acceptable and studying the characteristics of individuals and groups who will be placed in the training environment. They add that it is important to determine what prospective trainees can and cannot do so that the training program can be designed to emphasize the areas in which they are deficient. Commenting on determining training needs, they emphasized that in today's highly competitive business environment, undertaking program simply because other firms are doing it, is asking for trouble. Instead they added that a systematic approach to addressing bonafide needs must be undertaken. According to them training needs may be determined by conducting analyses on several levels:

From an overall organizational perspective, the firm's strategic mission, goals and corporate plans should be studied along with the results of the human resource planning. The next step or level of analysis focuses on the tasks that must be accomplished in order to achieve the firm's purposes. Job descriptions, performance appraisals and interviews or surveys of supervisors and job incumbents are important data sources for this analysis level. Finally they agree that individual training needs must be addressed.

### **Training Design and Employee Performance**

Dr. Divya Rana (2012) In his study assessing the impact of training design and development on employee performance in insurance sector in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, The impact of training design and training and development practices on employee performance will result from a properly planned and systematic training program and design to ensure that the training is effective and that it enhances performance. The study observed that if the organization invested in the right type of employee training it can enhance performance as well as competencies and skills.

According to Kenney & Reid (2016) planned training is the deliberate intervention aimed at achieving the learning necessary for improved job performance. The training plan will serve as the guidelines for both the trainer and the trainee to follow in order to successfully implement the program. It covers the individuals involved in the training, the person that will administer the program, the required resources and the content to be followed. Once the plan for the program has been outlined then the training lesson is designed. The training lesson is developed to help

the participants focus on the segments developed and also set out the time frame for each segment. After this, a competent trainer is hired to undertake the training. The trainer should be able to communicate and transfer knowledge effectively.

### **Training Policies and Employee Performance**

Kenney et al (1992) makes a point that companies should have different policies for training depending on the class or level of employment or level of employees to be trained. They pointed out that training policies are necessary to provide guidelines for those responsible for planning and implementing training, to ensure that a company's training resources are allocated to pre-determined requirements, to provide for equality of opportunity for training throughout the company; and, to inform employees of training opportunities. As much as these policies seem to be accurate, they are silent on the elements of budgetary provision and top management support for training.

According to Beer et al (1984), general management make important decisions daily that affect this relationship and this leads to a map of Human Resource Management territory. The global competition and swiftness of changes emphasize the importance of human capital within organizations, as well as the swiftness and ways of knowledge gaining of that capital. In the economy where uncertainty is the only certainty, knowledge is becoming a reliable source of sustained competitive advantage. Knowledge is becoming basic capital and the trigger of development. Previously built on foundations of possessing specific resources and low costs, present day competition is based on knowledge possessing and efficient knowledge management.

### **Training Programmes Evaluation and Employee Performance**

Based on recent survey of corporate training programs using Kirkpatrick's four-level evaluation by the American society for training (2016), only 4.3% of the organizations surveyed measured results, 13.7% measured behavior change, 27.9% measured learning and 88.9% reported using participants' reactions. These findings indicate that majority of the organizations evaluated the reactions and opinions of their training participants immediately upon completion of training programs. The main purpose of reaction evaluation is to enhance the quality of training programs, which in turn leads to improved performance. The ultimate objective is to make training programs more efficient and more effective for organizational performance empowerment.

Hamlin (1974) in his study on training programs and their role in improving employee performance advocated that until control measures are taken to correct any deficiencies after the training, evaluation has not been completed and thereby ineffective. Evaluation is an integral feature of training, but it could be difficult because it is often hard to set measurable objectives. Training evaluation should result in: determining the effectiveness of the training program, deciding whether to change, stop or expand the program, how to improve the program for future delivery.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This research problem was studied through the use of a descriptive research design. The population for this study was the county government employees among the 7 Sub-Counties in Murang'a County, Kenya who totaled to 2525. The study employed random stratified sampling technique to develop a sample. The study therefore sampled 253 respondents from the population to inform the research findings which formed 10% of the target population. The study used a semi-structured survey questionnaire administered to each member of the sample population. The study administered the questionnaire individually to all respondents of the study. The study exercised care and control to ensure all questionnaires issued to the respondents were received and achieve this, the study maintained a register of questionnaires, which were sent, and which were received. The questionnaire were administered using a drop and pick later method. Before processing the responses, the completed questionnaires were edited for completeness and consistency. Quantitative data collected were analyzed by the use of descriptive statistics using SPSS (Version 22) and presented through percentages, means, standard deviations and frequencies. The information was displayed by use of bar charts, graphs and pie charts and in prose-form. . Content analysis was used to test data that is qualitative in nature or aspect of the data collected from the open ended questions. In addition, the study conducted a multiple regression analysis. The multiple regression equation is:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1X_1 + \beta_2X_2 + \beta_3X_3+ \beta_4X_4+\epsilon$$

Where: Y= Murang'a County Employee Performance;  $B_0$  - intercept coefficient;  $\epsilon_i$  - error term (extraneous variables);  $X_1$  - training needs analysis;  $X_2$ - Training design;  $X_3$ -training policies;  $X_4$ -evaluation of training programs;  $\beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3$  and  $\beta_4$ =regression coefficient

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

### **Training Needs Analysis and Employee Performance**

The study sought to establish the extent to which training needs analysis was being practiced by the County Government of Murang'a as a facet of peak employee performance. The respondents were to this effect asked to indicate their level of agreement on the following statements on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 (strongly disagree), 2 (disagree), 3 (moderately agree), 4 (agree), 5 (strongly agree). The study respondents moderately agreed that the county conducts regular training needs assessment, the training provided is as identified during training needs assessment, the county conducts skill analysis for its personnel regularly, performance management is conducted periodically to establish personnel capacity and output, performance appraisal helps to identify and justify training and development needs of the county staff and that the county public service board conducts county personnel analysis annually to ascertain training dynamics as indicated by a mean of 2.77, 2.51, 2.66, 2.84, 2.71 and 3.16 respectively. The respondents on the other hand disagreed that the county government of Murang'a conducts training when an employee receives a new role and that through personnel analysis the county is able to identify



skill gaps and organize for sourcing as indicated by a mean of 2.08 and 2.11 respectively. This indicates generally that the county government to a moderate extent employed training needs analysis as a systematic approach training to improve the capacity of new and existing employees in their operations. This findings correlate with those by Goldstein & Ford (2011) in their study on needs assessment and effective training and development whether they established that needs assessment assists in determining whether the organization's training needs, objectives and problems can be met or addressed by training.

### **Training Design and Employee Performance**

To establish the effect of training design on employee performance, the respondents were asked to rate the extent to which the following training designs indicators enhanced employee performance in their county government using the 5-point Likert Scale where: 5.Very Great Extent 4.Great Extent 3.Moderate Extent 2.Small Extent 1.No Extent. The findings indicated that the respondents disagreed that the county has a robust training and development planning mechanism that informs policy and procedures, there is a proper allocation of a training budget, training process is systematized and that there is a clear framework on the implementation of training as indicated by a mean of 2.06, 2.45, 2.44 and 2.36 respectively. The respondents moderately agreed that training implemented in the county government is result-based, the right training has been developed for the employees in the county and that trainings are both on job and off job to embrace diversity and improve practicability as indicated by a mean of 2.56, 2.71 and 3.41 respectively. The respondents agreed that there is a continuous improvement of the training and development systems as indicated by a mean of 3.66 and standard deviation of 0.883. This indicates that the county government to a significant extent has enhanced training design development, customization, facilitation and policy reinforcement.

Similar findings were indicated by April (2015) on the effect of training design on employee productivity among firms in Russia where he established that training design makes it easy to plan a training, make it systematic and result oriented.

### **Training Policies and Employee Performance**

The respondents were asked to rate the extent to which the following training policies indicators enhance employee performance using the following scale where; 5.Very Great Extent 4.Great Extent 3.Moderate Extent 2.Small Extent 1.No Extent. The respondents agreed that the county has an employee training and development policy and the policies are planned and formulated in consultation with the staff as indicated by a mean of 3.71 and 3.51 respectively. The respondents moderately agreed that implementation of the training policy is based on the human resource needs of the county, the county hires consultants to guide and assist in policy formulation, implementation and monitoring and that feedback from monitoring informs policy improvements as indicated by a mean of 2.78, 2.97 and 3.01 respectively. The respondents however disagreed that the county has proper documentation on the staff training and development, monitoring and evaluation of training policy is continuous and that there are proper mechanism to collect

feedback on training policies as indicated by a mean of 2.45, 2.33 and 2.29 respectively. This indicates that the county had training policies in place but their implementation, monitoring and feedback were below expectations. This findings are similar to those by Kenney et al (1992) conducted on training policies determinants where they established that training policies rely on the class or level of employment or level of employees to be trained.

### **Training Programs Evaluation**

The study sought to establish the effect of monitoring and evaluation of the training programs offered by the county government of Murang'a on the performance of the employees. The respondents therefore used the scale provided to show the extent to which the following training and development programs evaluation indicators contribute to employee performance using a scale of 1-5 where; 5.Very Great Extent 4.Great Extent 3.Moderate Extent 2. Small Extent, 1.No Extent. The study respondents agreed to a small extent that training programs evaluation is continuously done at the County government of Murang'a and that learning evaluation is used in evaluation of training programs as indicated by a mean of 2.41 and 2.56 respectively. The respondents indicated that to a moderate extent feedback from the evaluation is used to amend, improve and implement the programs; the county evaluates the behavioural reaction of the training programs among the county personnel, the county bases its evaluation on the results of the training of the county staff and the county conducts an analysis on employee performance after a training program as indicated by a mean of 2.56, 2.77, 3.04 and 3.46 respectively. The respondents to a great extent agreed that the county has a reactionary evaluation on training programs as indicated by a mean of 3.78 and standard deviation of 0.851. This indicates that the devolved unit evaluated its training programs however not continuously and was mainly reactionary instead of being a learning one to enable draw feedback and come up with areas of improvement as also indicated by Kirkpatrick (1994) in his study on evaluation of training programs and corporate performance in Malaysia where he indicated that there are four level sin evaluation of training which include reaction, leaning, behaviour and results which needs to be adhered to improve performance of the workforce.

### **Employee Performance**

The dependent variable for the study was the performance of employees in the 7 sub-counties in Murang'a County Government. The respondents were therefore asked for each of the following statements to indicate their level of agreement on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 (strongly disagree), 2 (disagree), 3 (moderately agree), 4 (agree), 5 (strongly agree). The respondents moderately agreed that the county staff have a high output due to training and job satisfaction among staff is high as indicated by a mean of 2.81 and 3.04 respectively. The respondents agreed that the county staff are willing and enthusiastic to take up new roles after training, the county staff are motivated and confident in discharging their duties due to enhanced capacity, the staff are committed to discharge their duties and that the county has improved staff efficiency through training as indicated by a mean of 3.64, 3.81, 3.71 and 3.69 respectively. The respondents

however disagreed that there is high effectiveness in service delivery and that the level of customer services has improved as indicated by a mean of 2.40 and 2.37 respectively. This indicates that the study variables on systematic approach training had a significant effect on the performance of employees in the county government of Murang'a.

**INFERENCE STATISTICS**

Inferential statistics were used to determine the degree of relationship between systematic approach training and employee performance in Murang'a County Government, Kenya. The summary of findings of coefficient of determination and coefficient of adjusted determination are as shown in Table 1.

**Table 1: Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.871 <sup>a</sup>	.851	.843	1.37712

The findings found out that coefficient of correlation R was 0.871 an indication of strong positive correlation between the variables. Coefficient of adjusted determination R<sup>2</sup> was 0.843 which changes to 84.3% an indication of changes of dependent variable can be explained by (training needs analysis, training design, training policies and training programs evaluation). The residual of 15.7% can be explained by other factors beyond the scope of the current study.

The study carried out an ANOVA at 95% level of significance. The findings of F<sub>Calculated</sub> and F<sub>Critical</sub> are as shown in Table 2.

**Table 2: ANOVA**

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	821.233	51	16.103	10.5788	.000 <sup>b</sup>
Residual	251.167	165	1.5222		
Total	1072.400	216			

The findings show that F<sub>Calculated</sub> was 10.5788 and F<sub>Critical</sub> was 6.3341, this show that F<sub>Calculated</sub> > F<sub>Critical</sub> (10.5788 > 6.3341) an indication that the overall regression mode was significant for the study. The p value was 0.000 < 0.05 an indication that at least one variable significantly influenced employee productivity.

The study ran a regression establish the individual influence of the variables to firm performance. The findings are indicated in Table 3.

**Table 3: Coefficients of Regression**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
(Constant)	5.971	0.685		5.431	.000
Training needs analysis	0.864	.132	.012	10.521	.000
Training design	0.804	.122	.014	11.314	.000
Training policies	0.779	.121	.033	10.406	.000
Training programs evaluation	0.796	.142	.114	9.511	.000

The resultant equation was:

$$Y = 5.971 + 0.864X_1 + 0.804X_2 + 0.779X_3 + 0.796X_4$$

Where: Y = Employee Performance in the County Government of Murang’a; X<sub>1</sub> = Training needs analysis; X<sub>2</sub> = Training design; X<sub>3</sub> = Training policies; X<sub>4</sub> = Training programs evaluation

The study found out that by holding all the variables constant, employee performance will be at 5.971. A unit increase in training needs analysis when holding all the other variables constant, employee performance would be at 0.864. A unit increase in training design while holding other factors constant, employee performance in the county government of Murang’a would increase by 0.804. A unit improvement in formulation and implementation of relevant training policies while holding other factors constant, employee performance would be at 0.779. A unit increase in training programs evaluation while other factors are held constant, employee performance of the county would be at 0.796. The findings pointed out that the independent variables had a p value of 0.000<0.05 an indication that the systematic approach training significantly influenced employee performance in the county government of Murang’a. The findings correlate with those by Belcourt et al (2015) in their study on job training analysis and human resource requirements in an organization which established that systematic approach training guides training and development implementation to meet HR requirements and needs and hence improving employee performance.

## CONCLUSION

The study concluded that systematic approach training had a positive and significant effect on the performance of employees in the County Government of Murang’a. It was concluded that the county government to a moderate extent employed training needs analysis as a systematic approach training to improve the capacity of new and existing employees in their operations, that the county government to a significant extent has enhanced training design development, customization, facilitation and policy reinforcement. Finally the study concluded that the county had training policies in place but their implementation, monitoring and feedback were below expectations and evaluated its training programs however not continuously and was mainly

reactionary instead of being a learning one to enable draw feedback and come up with areas of improvement.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The study recommends that the county government of Murang'a needs to involve employees in training needs assessment to improve the relevance of the trainings.

The study recommended that there is need for continuous monitoring and evaluation of the training programs to ensure optimal performance.

The study further recommended that the county government needs to come up with friendly and relevant training policies that can enhance capacity development among the new, existing and stakeholder staff.

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